(ii) Decrease in Customs Duty for import of carpet grade wool to 10%.

(iii) Concessional rate of import duty at 10% on report of woollen machinery required for modernisation.

(iv) Specific projects are taken up for research and development through Wool Research Association.

(v) Testing facilities have been provided at important locations.

(vi) Through Wool & Woollen Export Promotion Council, the industry participates in international trade fairs and exhibitions.

(vii) The proposed Technological Upgradation Fund would cover Weaving and Processing sector of the woollen textile industry.

(viii) NIFT has created a Knitwear Design Centre for development of fashions on international level.

(ix) Various development schemes are implemented through Central Wool Development Board for improvement of Wool Sector.

Ban on Production of Items in Powerloom Sector

2626. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has banned the production of 22 types of cloth items on powerloom;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government are aware about the loss of employment because of such decision;

(d) the steps taken by Government to protect the interest of the workers;

(e) whether Government are also aware about the closure of the powerloom units in Bhagalpur, in Bihar; and

(f) if so, the details regarding the assistance provided to the workers?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) and (b) government has not banned any cloth to be produced on powerlooms. However, vide its order No. SO-557(E) dated July 26, 1996, the Ministry of Textiles reserved 11 articles of textiles for exclusive production by handloom sector under Sub-Section (1) of Section 3 of the Handloom (Reservation of Articles for Production) Act, 1985. This has been done to protect the interests of handloom weavers.

(c) and (d) There is no information about loss of employment as a result of that order.

(e) and (f) There is no report about closure of powerloom industry at Bhagalpur.

Incentive to Sericulture Farmers of Orissa

2627. SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a vast scope for increasing areas under sericulture in Orissa;

(b) if so, the possibility explored in this regard during the last five years;

(c) the incentives granted to the farmers to grow silk in that state; and

(d) the details of the areas in that state where sericulture has been started?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) to (c) Orissa State produces three varieties of silk. It is the second largest producer of Tasar silk in the country. A small quantity of Mulberry and Eri silk is also produced. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Government for development of sericulture industry in Orissa the Central Silk Board (CSB) has established various research/research extension units besides implementing

certain specific schemes for production of the 3 varieties of silk, namely, Tasar, Eri and Mulberry. Some of the important projects implemented during the last 5 years are indicated below:

1. Intensive Sericulture Development Project was implemented in Ganjam District (1987-88 to 1994-95) at a total cost of Rs. 45.44 crores.
2. Under the national Sericulture Project, (1989—1996) a pilot project was implemented in Koraput District for development of mulberry sericulture.
3. Inter State Tasar Project (1981-82 — 1992-93) was implemented with the assistance from Swiss Development Cooperation for improving the technological base of the Tasar sector.

In addition, through its network of R&D/research extension units assistance is provided to the State Government like seed production and multiplication and financial support towards purchase of Tasar cocoon. Assistance under the Catalytic Development Programme is also available like upgradation of machinery for production of quality silk, incentive for promotion of quality silk and use of multiend reeling machine. Till date 17 such Catalytic Micro projects have been approved for implementation in Orissa at a cost of Rs. 3.17 crores of which CSB component is Rs. 1.94 crores.

(d) Details of the districts in Orissa where sericulture is mainly practised is given below:

Mulberry	Tasar	Eri
Koraput	Mayurbanjh	Cuttack
Phulbani	Sundergarh	Sundergarh
Keonjhar	Keonjhar	
Gajapati	Sambalpur	
Kalahandi		
Nayagarh		
Mayurbanjh		
Rayagada		
Deogarh		

Financial Assistance to Powerloom, Handloom and Handicrafts Units of Assam

2628. SHRIMATI BASANTI SARMA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the number of powerloom, handloom and handicrafts units functioning at present in the different parts of the country particularly in the State of Assam and the employees engaged in each of them;

(b) whether it is a fact that most of the units are running in losses;

(c) if so, the details thereof, unit-wise and reasons therefor; and

(d) the effective measures being taken or proposed to be taken by Government to give some financial assistance and other incentives to revive these units in the country?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) As per information available there are about 15 lakh powerloom units in the country employing persons many times of this number. As per Census of Handloom conducted in 1987-88, the number of house holds and non-household units engaged in handloom weaving were 30.6 lakh and 0.24 lakh respectively and the number of household members engaged in weaving activity and preparatory work were 43.7 lakh and 21.5 lakh respectively.

Employment in handicrafts sector is estimated to be over 76 lakh in the year 1997-98.

The details in respect of Assam are as follows:—

Total NO. of powerlooms — 2,726

Estimated No. of persons employed — 13,630.